

**CITY OF WOODSTOCK**  
**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
March 11, 2014  
City Council Chambers

The regular meeting of the Woodstock Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at 7:02 PM by Chairman Mike McCleary on Tuesday, March 11, 2014.

**COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:** Nic Kearfott, Chairman Mike McCleary, Laurel Sheahan,

**COMMISSION MEMBERS ABSENT:** Steve Erwin

**STAFF PRESENT:** Parks Supervisor Bob Hoadley, Recreation Director Dave Zinnen, Parks Foreman John Mecklenburg, Public Works Director Paul Ruscko

**OTHERS PRESENT:** City Clerk Dianne Mitchell

**C. FLOOR DISCUSSION:**

1. Public comments User Groups  
No comments
2. Commission Member comments for any item not on the agenda  
No comments

**D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Motion by N. Kearfott, second by L. Sheahan to approve the November 12, 2013 Woodstock Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes as presented. Ayes: L. Sheahan, N. Kearfott, M. McCleary. Nays: None. Absentees: S. Erwin. Abstentions: None. Motion carried

- 2. Transmittals:** The following items have been transmitted to the Commission for information and there is no discussion expected or action recommended.

1. Recreation Department Report for February 2014  
Chairman McCleary questioned if the entities outside of the City of Woodstock that participate in the City Scene pay a portion of the printing and postage. D. Zinnen stated that NISRA pays but not the Challenger per the Mayor. He advised that the library did participate but they will be pulling out and doing their own publication. He stated that a lot of the local groups do not pay and he noted that the ads cost \$1,000 a page.

Chairman McCleary stated that looking at the budget it looks like the Recreation Department is self-funding itself. D. Zinnen advised that the general fund covers the full time staff and the front counter staff. He stated that the program revenues cover the operating expenses such as referees, printing, advertising, instructors and the playground program. Chairman McCleary stated that most citizens in Woodstock have contact with the parks and the Recreation Center and he thinks it is great that in essence they fund themselves.

D. Zinnen thanked N. Kearfott for his help with providing gym space at Woodstock North and he thanked S. Erwin with his help at Woodstock High School. He expressed his appreciation of being able to use the gyms.

2. Parks Division Report for February 2014  
M. McCleary asked when the first games are scheduled and B. Hoadley advised that they haven't received any scheduling but noted that last year the first game was on March 14<sup>th</sup>.

L. Sheahan questioned if skating at the park was open during the winter and B. Hoadley advised that it was open at the upper pond at Emricson and at Hennen Park. He stated that the

ice was the thickest since he has been here and he advised that there were skaters. Chairman McCleary stated that it was a good year for sledding and B. Hoadley stated that it was an exceptional year for sledding and snow removal.

N. Kearfott questioned what fields they will look to try to open first. B. Hoadley stated that historically it is based on high school for scheduled games. He advised that normally it is Dream Field, Bates 4 & 6, Bigelow and South soccer. He stated that each field is different because of the sun and noted that normally Fields 3 & 5 at Bates Park are the last to have the snow come off because of the tree line.

### **3. Old Business**

1. None

### **4. New Business**

1. WGS Proposal for Renovations to Bates Park

Erich Thurow, WGS, stated that they attempted to get Field 3 going in the fall but ran out of time with the weather. He reported that they got the main drainage in and that they were going to try to get dirt down but noted that they haven't done it yet. He stated that it will be an issue this spring with scheduling. He advised that they need to put dirt down, re-grade it and seed. He asked if sod is an option and noted that they would be willing to pay for it. He wasn't sure how much the grass would affect playing since most of it is in foul territory. B. Hoadley stated that the only thing will be keeping it water and advised that it takes 7 – 10 days for it to root.

E. Thurow stated that he doesn't know when they will be able to get in there to finish which will cause a scheduling problem. He advised that their numbers are down a little right now and noted that their final registration is this weekend. He stated that field is the one with lights and they want to get going on it because they want to use it twice a night. He reiterated that scheduling is going to be a bit of an issue this spring and they are hoping it is ready by the end of May.

B. Hoadley said they should be able to seed the second week in April noting that it will be more dormant seeding but once the soil temperatures get up to 50 degrees it takes off. E. Thurow stated that he will coordinate with B. Hoadley once they can see the ground.

E. Thurow advised that they plan to finish Field 3 this year and then tackle Fields 4 & 6 next year. He stated that they will hopefully get the batting cages nets up soon and advised that they put some Astroturf down so they can use it.

Chairman McCleary questioned when opening day will be and E. Thurow advised that it is supposed to be the first weekend in May at Bates Park. Chairman McCleary questioned if they will be bringing in a waiver request in the near future. E. Thurow stated that he believes Pete did it in the fall but noted that he didn't believe it was a complete one. He stated that he thinks all of their expenses are out but noted that they have to purchase the seed. He stated that hopefully the City can get them the dirt since it is still in the budget and B. Hoadley affirmed. N. Kearfott asked if they are going to try to get the black dirt down before the thaw or wait until after. E. Thurow stated that he would have to consult with B. Hoadley to see which would be the best option.

2. WLL Proposal for Merryman Field Project, Scoreboards, Challenger Division

Will McKay, WLL President, reported that they have a private citizen with a willingness to help WLL improve the exterior around Merryman Fields. He stated that the field was

designed to drain a certain way and it creates issues when trying to play baseball. He stated that the grass that was planted hasn't grown. He reported that they did an end of the year survey and advised that the biggest complaints were the fields at Merryman. He stated that Woodstock hosts a bunch of tournaments inviting outside people who compliment the field surfaces themselves however when it rains at Merryman it poses issues for walkways.

He stated that for the Merryman project they still have a time frame of getting it done this spring. He advised that Tom Hawkins, WLL Chief Operating Officer, is working with B. Hoadley and the private Woodstock citizen to coordinate the project. He stated that they are looking at about \$8,000 of expenses and he advised that the citizen is donating half and WLL is coming up with the other half.

He referenced a picture of Roskie Field showing the lip that is two inches from the infield dirt to the top of the grass which is starting to pose a safety issue. He advised that there will be a lot of potential issues for the user groups if it isn't addressed as a priority. He advised that WLL wanted to make them aware that they are starting to look at it noting that they put together a rough budget of \$14,000 which includes irrigation of the field to try to prevent the issue going forward. He advised that he has pulled in WLL's two past presidents to help with the project as it will be a massive undertaking since it is a large field and it is going to be a large expense. He stated that they are looking to have a lot of the funds donated through the banner program and a potential bowling event. He advised that if they can't do it this fall they will push it off to fall 2015.

Chairman McCleary questioned what type of grass was originally planted at Merryman Fields and what will be planted. W. McKay advised that they are looking at planting bluegrass. B. Hoadley stated that they are referring to the outside areas around the fields. He advised that between Woodstock North and Merryman Park there are a couple of wet detention areas and some of the water goes across into the pond. He advised that it isn't City of Woodstock property and is not maintained by the City. He stated that instead of bringing water across where the fields are it sheds off the fields from north to south. He stated that the water comes between the fields to the detention area by the access road.

B. Hoadley stated that WLL is proposing to do something with the water because it will stand out there and people have to go through the water to get to the fields. He stated that in regards to tiling, he was talking about the City engineer involved to go out and do some measurements. He stated that it can't really be tiled because all of the irrigation lines run south of the backstop fences. He stated that on several of the fields the lines go up in between the fields to get laterals out for the irrigation system. He stated that you can't go out and trench unless you get underneath it. He advised that engineering wise you aren't going to be able to go out trench a line and put in drainage.

B. Hoadley stated that bluegrass is more durable but it takes roughly 30 days to germinate; so it is a long period to keep people off of it until it gets established. Chairman McCleary questioned if the original grass was bluegrass and B. Hoadley advised that he would have to check the spec. D. Zinnen stated that there were two dry summers in a row after it was seeded and there wasn't time to have it established before getting spectators out there.

N. Kearfott questioned if there was any concern with planting in the spring instead of waiting until the fall and he then asked when opening day is scheduled. W. McKay stated that it supposed to be the first weekend in May and noted that they were hoping that the weather will be conducive to them getting out there in the next week or two but that is not the case. B. Hoadley stated that you need at 50 degrees soil temperature and historically it is usually the

second week of May. N. Kearfott stated that he is concerned with WLL putting money into then starting games in mid-May and people are beating down the areas walking on it. W. McKay advised that they have talked about putting in limestone paths however the layout of the complex doesn't make it conducive for that.

N. Kearfott questioned how they will tackle the lip at Roskie Park. W. McKay advised that they are talking about new sod. Chairman McCleary asked if it is too thick to shave it and W. McKay affirmed. B. Hoadley stated that everything at that complex goes from west to east which is why they never paved the limestone path because it is part of the drainage system noting that it all goes back to the creek in the back. He stated that over the years it is steadily moving in that way and noted that they will start rebuilding with clay sand. He stated that probably another seven years from now they will have to do it again. W. McKay stated that is why they are also talking about irrigation. He stated that their preference is to rebuild Roskie since it already has lights and is in a nice complex.

Tim Oman, WLL, thanked the City for putting up the Don Peasley scoreboard on Merryman 7. He stated that the kids of Little League know what that means and noted that Don Peasley meant a lot to the City of Woodstock and it was an apropos tribute. He referenced a picture of the current scoreboard on Merryman 6 and advised that they had it up in time for hosting the Little League 50/70 State Championship last year and he noted that they got a lot of compliments on the field and scoreboard. He stated that it is manufactured by Nevco and advised that it is the same scoreboard that is out at Dream Field and on Don Peasley Field. He stated that it is the same scoreboard that they are proposing for Merryman 5 and Roskie.

T. Oman referenced a photo showing the placement of the scoreboard on Merryman 6 and where it will be on Merryman 5. He stated that the reasons for the locations are that they face both dug-outs and anyone in the parking lot or coming up to the fields can see the scores. He stated that the sponsor on Merryman 5 is going to be Big Brothers, Big Sisters. He advised that it will be the same scoreboard installed at the same height as the other one with the hope that they will repeat the process on 3 & 4. He advised that with the addition of the scoreboards at Roskie, Merryman 5 and the Don Peasley Field now all of the WLL kids, Lightning kids, Avalanche kids, ages 11 and up in Woodstock will be playing their baseball games with scoreboards; it's a huge deal to these kids.

T. Oman referenced a map of Roskie Field and stated that the scoreboard will be down the right field line. He stated that they will work with the City and depending on where the electricity comes in they will pick a spot that doesn't interfere with the trees and is close to the electrical supply in right field. He stated that it will have a couple of controllers and they will make sure they are in the proper user groups hands. He advised that they are contemplating replacing a scoreboard at Sullivan noting that it would be about half of the cost because the infrastructure doesn't have to be installed. He stated that they would love to put the Sullivan name across the top and advised that down the road they would like to continue with putting the names of the fields up there.

N. Kearfott questioned if on Roskie Field there is a closer electrical source down left field line and B. Hoadley advised that there is not. He stated that Merryman 5, 6 & 7 are solar. N. Kearfott stated that when the sun sets the scoreboard facing west might be hard to see. B. Hoadley stated that the one on Dream Field, which was through several donations, runs on AC. He stated that at Roskie they could go solar, but with the trees they are worried about the panels getting full sun to charge the batteries. He stated that it could be done in left by coming off one of the light poles, but it is something that they have to look into further. He stated that when they installed the lighting they ran extra cable to the poles in case of an underground

failure or for additions. He stated that it could be done in left.

W. McKay stated that they are proposing right field to help deter potential vandalism. He stated that they have had some issues in the past with the buildings being spray painted. T. Oman referenced N. Kearfott's question regarding the sun and advised that he went to Harper College where they have a scoreboard for their softball field that faces the sun in the late afternoon and he stated that you could easily see the LED lights even in the sun. He stated that right field gives great view for everybody coming into the park. He stated that they are asking that the scoreboard be put up as high as possible so it is difficult for it to be vandalized. B. Hoadley advised that the intensity of the light can be changed.

Chairman McCleary referenced the solar batteries and asked how many games can be played. T. Oman stated that they normally the installer puts in two batteries but in this case they daisy chained three because the solar panel is on the north side of the scoreboard. He advised that with three batteries they get about 10-11 hours of power. He advised that they didn't have any issues last year with the games and noted that the batteries will go 4-5 year and are about \$150-\$200 to replace.

Rochelle Donahue, VP WLL Challenger League, stated that the program is for special needs kids with developmental and physical disabilities. She reported that she got involved with it because she has a child with cerebral palsy. She stated that they take kids from all over McHenry County and advised that they played all of their games at Merryman in past years noting that they will be playing some at Bates this year. She stated that they take any kid in the county area up to the age of 22 as long as they are enrolled in school. She stated they really don't have any rules when they play the game and advised that they play two innings with each kid fielding and batting. She stated that each child is aided by a buddy who help them field, bat and run the bases.

She reported that enrollment is down this year but noted that the bulk of enrollment doesn't typically come in until the end. She stated that across the world there are 900 Challenger Leagues associated with Little League International. She stated that last year Woodstock Challenger had four teams and this year they are hoping to have to have six teams. She stated that they play six games per season and this year they are going to play eight and hold practices. She stated that they have opening and closing ceremonies to make the kids feel special. She stated that they are part of District 13 Little League and they hold a jamboree in the fall with all the Challenger Leagues in the district.

She reported that last year they were able to pick some players from their league to go to the Little League World Series. She stated that they had fifteen players and buddies representing District 13. She stated that went to Williamsport, PA and they were on T.V. She reported that they had a big practice on Sullivan and Channel 5 came out for it. She stated that their Little League World Series game was broadcast on ESPN 3 and WTTW Prime. She stated that it put a great name for Little League Challenger.

Chairman McCleary stated that they are familiar with the program and he thinks WLL is doing an excellent job. R. Donahue stated that is a great league and advised that they get a lot of support from the special education departments at the schools. She stated that this year they got a lot of support from D200 and were able to put flyers in the backpacks.

Chairman McCleary asked if they get any response from parents. R. Donahue advised that she did a survey last year at the end of the season and noted that the only complaint was the mud outside Merryman and no shade, which is why they are going to have some games at Bates.

She said they are hoping to raise some extra money this year to provide drinks and snacks after every games. She reported that their opening ceremony is May 4, 2014 at Merryman which includes a big party at the Woodstock Fire & Rescue station by Merryman. She advised that she will send a schedule out to D. Zinnen.

3. Capital Improvement Program (CIP)

D. Zinnen stated that they are proposing a sign for in front of the Recreation Center similar to the signs in front of the schools. N. Kearfott asked if it will be rolling or still. D. Zinnen stated that it depends on what he gets funded. B. Hoadley questioned if it is a LED sign and D. Zinnen affirmed. He stated that it is the only request they have noting that everything is generally funded through the operation of the Rec Center and the Aquatic Center.

Chairman McCleary questioned if there is a proposal to make the community events sign LED. B. Hoadley advised that it is the Chamber of Woodstock's sign noting that they do the maintenance and the only thing that Parks & Rec does is change it. He stated that they would love to have the Chamber change it to a LED sign.

Chairman McCleary stated that the dog park is a joint venture but the City of Woodstock doesn't get any name recognition on the sign even though they contribute a substantial amount of money. P. Ruscko introduced himself to the Commission and then advised that any documentation that the City is putting out recognizes it as a partnership with the understanding that the initiative and significant fundraising is being initiated by the Village of Bull Valley and their committee. He stated that the partnership came down to any work that they couldn't have volunteers do. He advised that if you look at any of the documentation that the City of Woodstock has put out it acknowledges that it is used by each but the parcel is owned, operated and maintained by the Village of Bull Valley. He stated after the initial capital outlay to open the park the ongoing effort is solely in their hands and they aren't asking for ongoing operational costs from the City.

P. Ruscko stated that the permit cost for residents for both municipalities are the same. Chairman McCleary asked if a Woodstock resident that wants a permit can purchase them at the Woodstock City Hall or do they have to go to Stickney House. P. Ruscko advised that they would have to go to Stickney House. He reported that the information is going to be included in the next City Scene and it is on their web site.

Chairman McCleary stated that it looks like there are three items on the CIP for Parks and Recreation; two "A's" and one "B" with the largest being the repayment of the bonds. P. Ruscko advised that the bonds are a significant capital outlay and the City continues to talk about the park bonds being subsidized by other funds because of the nature and the size of the bonds and the lack of equalized assessed value which continues to decrease and put a strain on parks which ultimately puts a strain on the general fund. He stated that they continue to propose that some of the other funds fund a share of it which is why there is a disparity in bond payment between the FY 14/15 and future years. He stated that the bond payment is pretty consistent and instead of the parks fund picking up 100% it is picking up about 80%.

P. Ruscko stated that the other "A" priority is the condition of the statue in park in the Square noting that if nothing is done it is going to get to a point where it is going to cost significantly more due to damage. He referred to the "B" item which is the playground equipment replacement at Raintree Park. He reported that there was a significant public rallying when the equipment was removed noting that that portion of the community does have a desire to have it replaced.

Chairman McCleary reported that #17 has been on the CIP since he started with the Commission and he questioned if it would ever become a reality. P. Ruscko stated that all of the projects have merit but it is a function of prioritizing and what is most important. In reference to the ponds silting in he stated that it has an impact on the ability to use them for skating and the ability to use it for drainage and storage. He believes that don't only add value from a community use perspective but from a community drainage perspective. He stated that at some point it will have to increase in priority.

Chairman McCleary referred to the Civil War statue and asked if any veteran groups have been asked to throw in money. P. Ruscko stated that he hasn't heard if of any requests from those organizations and he advised that it is a City owned property. He stated that they are proposing to have it repaired and they are budgeting for it. He stated that he will pose that question to the City Manager and the Opera House Director who is heading up the project.

B. Hoadley stated that along with the CIPs, there is also another portion for the City's motor pool which is the Parks vehicles, tractors etc. B. Hoadley stated that the chipper was replaced in the current fiscal year and noted that the aerial lift truck has been ordered. He stated that Parks & Rec do receive quite a bit out of that CIP funding too.

N. Kearfott questioned if they get the same amount of dollars in the budget each year to go towards these projects and if they do how is the sealing of the courts and the maintaining of areas kept up. He stated that he is concerned with them getting so far behind that the City has to put in more money to replace them. P. Ruscko stated that preventative maintenance on anything tends to cost less then deferring the maintenance and paying the bigger bill later. He advised that first and foremost you have to pay the bonds and each year we are showing that each year we are proposing that the parks fund pays a portion and the balance is paid by another fund. He stated that moving forward, every single year they will make that analysis if it makes sense for Parks or another fund. He stated that a similar proposal could come forward in FY 15/16.

P. Ruscko stated that assuming nothing changes, the amount of money every year would be similar. He advised that first you pay the bonds and the normal day to day operations and whatever is left over is what you can put into capital. He stated that assuming nothing changes from one year to the next, what you spent on capital last year would be similar to what you will spend on capital next year. He stated that then you need to look at prioritization noting that some of the items that are lower priority move up the chain because they get to the point of if you don't do anything they will no longer be of value. He stated that he thinks they have been consistently resealing courts and he noted that he is all about preventive maintenance. He stated that what they are proposing is what they think is the best for the City, but we will see if it is consistent with the vision of the Council.

B. Hoadley stated that Raintree Park playground wasn't even in the CIP for replacement, but since there was a voiced interest from a bunch of residents in the area, it pushed the City to reinstall it. L. Sheahan questioned if the pad for the pavilion is still there and whether it will be put up again. B. Hoadley stated that property taxes have gone down the past two years and advised that they were getting developer donations but we have had dry years. Chairman McCleary questioned how much money is coming in from developers annually and P. Ruscko advised that he didn't pull the park development fund but noted that he can forward the information. B. Hoadley stated that there is money coming in but not what it was. D. Zinnen stated that Ryland Homes is doing a whole page ad in the City Scene so things are picking up and moving in the right direction.

Motion by N. Kearfott, second by L. Sheahan to accept the recommended CIP projects as presented. Ayes: L. Sheahan, N. Kearfott, M. McCleary. Nays: None. Absentees: S. Erwin. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

## **5. Future Agenda Items**

1. Tentative agenda items identified by Administration
2. Requested by Commission: Any member may suggest an item to be considered by the Commission at a future meeting, but must be approved by a majority of the Commission to be included as a future agenda item.
  - a. Request for an updated list of the Commissioners

## **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by L. Sheahan, second by N. Kearfott to adjourn the regular meeting of the Woodstock Parks and Recreation Commission. Ayes: L. Sheahan, N. Kearfott, M. McCleary. Nays: None. Absentees: S. Erwin. Abstentions: None. Motion carried.

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dianne Mitchell - City Clerk